

Atop Korios City, it is said one can see the future.

This is, of course, false. The proverb was a devolution of positive chatter among Spirits and Leenis stating that Korios City was the “future of Kainar”. From the top of Korios City – a name given to its highest point – one can see all the way to the walls. A false equivalency was made between the metaphorical phrase and the literal perspective, and the proverb was born.

Kaso was aware of these facts. He knew why the proverb came to be, the exact logic that beget its existence, and the reasons why it was wrong. The top of Korios City was his favorite place to think all the same.

Once more, he had found himself leaning onto a wall on top of Korios City’s tallest building. The sun was beginning to grow and give an orange glow on Kaso’s dim fur and short, triangular ears as it neared the horizon long beyond Korios’ walls. Below him, glowing Spirits and Leenis carrying torches wandered about, speaking to one another in the lengthening shadow of the wall or scurrying to their homes. His view made them comparable to the size of a beetle, and an illogical part of his heart ached that they might be crushed.

He silenced it. The day’s work had been long, and he needed to return home soon so he could sleep to work just as hard tomorrow.

“Awful dramatic sunset from up here, isn’t it?”

Kaso heard the voice behind him. It was young and spritely, yet not obnoxiously so; it didn’t irritate him as many did.

“You can’t see the future from the top of Korios City,” Kaso responded, turning his head to the side just enough to see the spirit that had joined him. He was Kaso’s age, yet he still possessed the glow and general energy of a newborn spirit.

“Well, you can’t see the future *of the world* from the top of Korios City,” he chimed in response.

“That is exactly what I said yet you make me concerned my point wasn’t clear enough.”

The spirit laughed once, a smile spreading across his face as he walked into Kaso’s view.

“There’s got to be something up here worth seeing, or you wouldn’t be up here, would you?”

Kaso smirked and looked at his lower paws. He didn't entirely know why he had come up here either.

"The marvels of engineering," Kaso answered, mostly bluffing. "Countless lifetimes of effort to design and build a city that can withstand the perils of Kainar. A citadel against nature."

At that comment, the spirit's smile faded, and Kaso could practically feel some of their bouncy energy leaving them.

"Does that not scare you?" he asked, concern in his eyes.

Kaso narrowed his eyes. He couldn't make sense of the question he'd been asked.

"Does what not scare me?"

"Do you ever think all this building is unleashing something we're going to wish we hadn't?" the spirit clarified. Kaso was somehow even more confused, but after a moment he nodded his head in realization.

"Don't let those good-for-nothings from Hoa get inside your head. They're made of glass, they don't understand what Kainar is like," Kaso attempted to reassure the spirit.

"It's not just because of them. We just keep building and building. Sometimes I think nobody is bothering to keep track of the consequences - or maybe they don't want to."

Kaso drew a breath to speak but hesitated at the last moment. Instead, he took another glance at the city below him. Dwellings packed near one another filled in nearly every inch of the city, sometimes stacked atop each other, and the ever-imposing wall at the edge of the city.

"As long as there are more Leenis and Spirits, we'll need to build more homes. There's no two ways about it," Kaso asserted.

"I know, but..." the spirit tried to continue, trailing off as he tried to put his thoughts into words. His face contorted into shame as he failed to continue his statement.

"I... understand your concern, though," Kaso relented, trying to restore the other spirit's childish joy.

"What do you mean?" he asked. Kaso sighed.

"You can't see the future from the top of Korios City. Logically, there is no reason for me to be up here. I already know every twist and turn you can see from up here. There's nothing I can learn."

The other spirit furrowed his brows at Kaso, who sighed.

"I'm here anyway," Kaso continued. "Even if I don't know what it is, something compels me to come back here."

"The sunset?" The other spirit asked with a sly smile. Kaso chuckled.

"It *is* awful dramatic, but no. I come up here because I can see all of Korios City at once, like I mentioned before."

The spirit cocked his head in confusion. Kaso looked back out to the city and continued.

"You see, when a spirit from Hoa makes art, it's obvious. Not the message it sends, of course – they'd never put anything simply – but the fact that it is art is plain to see. Not all art is like that."

"I don't follow," the other spirit prompted. Kaso took a moment to think. He had always been poor at explaining anything but construction details.

"I think art doesn't have to be only art. It can be art and something else. In the case of Kainar, I believe Korios City is both practical engineering and a masterpiece."

"You mean to say Korios City is art?"

"Even if it doesn't look like it at first, yes," Kaso agreed. The other spirit looked contemplatively down on the city below them.

"I suppose Hoa wouldn't understand that," he agreed.

"My point exactly. They see beauty in a flower, while we see beauty in a city. Fortunately for us, cities are useful as well," Kaso explained further.

"Though, in Hoa, apparently they have little use for cities."

"Like I said, good-for-nothing and made of glass," Kaso repeated cynically. The other spirit giggled and nodded.

"I don't think building things like Korios City is a loss of culture," Kaso continued, "but rather the development of a culture all of our own."

The other spirit resolved their laughter into a smile as Kaso finished talking. He seemed to have regained his energy. Kaso let his eyes drift back to the

sunset. The sun was now a deep red and almost beyond the horizon, and seeing it made his blood run momentarily cold. He needed to be home already.

"I'm sorry to have kept you held up so long," the other spirit apologized, seeing the concern on Kaso's face. "You're probably busy."

Kaso nodded in response. The other spirit sighed easily and looked back outwards towards Korios City.

"What is your name?" Kaso asked plainly.

"I'm Tano."

"I'm glad to have met you here, Tano. I'll keep in touch," Kaso finally greeted.

"Glad to meet you as well," Tano reciprocated.

"Have a good night."

Kaso headed back down the stairs to the city streets without another word. Tano turned his eyes towards the sunset and watched as it finally ducked below the horizon, bathing the world in a deeper darkness. As it did, countless tiny dots of light from guardians, torches, and the spirit tree became visible below him.

A Hoa spirit might've said it looked like a lake of stars beneath their paws.

Tano believed it looked like progress.